

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph between lines 12-19 of page 1 with the following amended paragraph:

A1
To be processed in parallel, the data items are distributed among a set of processes that will process the data items. Depending on the operation involved, the distribution may be random, based on values associated with the data items. For example, in a sort operation, the distribution will generally be based on the sort key, where data items with a sort key[[s]] in a particular sub-range will be sent to a corresponding "bucket." In this context, a bucket is a destination in a data distribution operation. Thus, the act of distributing the data items to the parallel processes involves establishing a set of buckets and assigning the data items to the buckets.

Please replace the paragraph between lines 14-16 of page 5 with the following amended paragraph:

A2
According to one aspect of the invention, the random seeds used by the random generators to randomly select the sampled data are distinct for each of the subsets of the set of data.